$2

loud paper

dedicated to increasing the volume of architectural discourse

take me to the fair

volume 1, issue 2

loud paper is a zine dedicated to increasing the volume of architectural discourse. It is a text which is a slambamgetitoutthere way of linking together architectural thoughts, musings and new work.

loud paper is an outgrowth of a frustration caused by the stagnation of ordinary forms of architectural dialogue. It challenges the failed systems of glossy trade magazines which solely publish the big gun architects, academic journals which maintain the elitism of an overly intellectual language (as well as the same cast of theoretical characters) and the slowness of book publication. These systems deflate the spirit of new architectural thinking. A louder, faster system must be implemented.

loud paper is open to all: students, architects, educators, girls about town, dear Johns, and critics as a place for writing loud about architecture and culture. Submissions of articles, projects, letters, book and music reviews, no matter how loosely architectural are accepted.

This publication is No.23.2 in the Public Access Press Series sponsored by the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and the LEF Foundation.

loud paper is anti-copyright. Any article may be reproduced as long as author and source credit are given.

Contact loud paper care of Mimi Zeiger, 501 Pacific St., No. 206, Santa Monica, CA 90405.
email: loudpaper@mailexcite.com

call for submissions

loud paper is currently accepting submissions for a January issue. Contribution deadline is December 21, 1997.

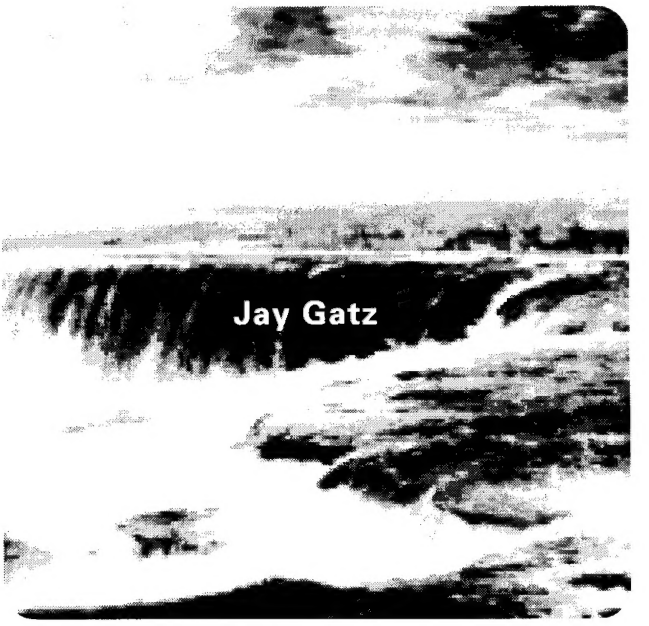
about this issue

Lately, I have been fixating on the 1964/65 New York World's Fair. Partly because it was that particular event in United States History which was the birthplace of the Belgian waffle, or as it was called at the Fair, the Bel-Gem waffle. It is a combination of breakfast and desert food, and it helped to change the American landscape, since it is the staple of the International House of Pancakes, whose powder blue, steeply angled roofs are endlessly recognizable all over the country. But I digress. More than just offering the world the tasty treats, the 1964/65 World's Fair serves up questions regarding the future, technology, and commodity culture all topped with a dollop (like whipped cream on the top of that waffle) of nostalgia. The images of the Fair are seductive and also offer a good look at utopian, quasi innocent and fantastic architecture built at a moment just prior to a point of unprecedented change, the later sixties countercultural revolution.

What follows is a list which is a combination of people I would like to thank for their thoughts, support, and help during the production of this second installment of 'loud paper,' and a list of the contents of the time capsule buried at the Fair on October 16, 1965:

John, Margaret, bikini, Kazys, plastic wrap, Ed, pure zirconium, April, Kevin, Margi, Mickey, Polaroid camera, Jeremy, Adam, Karen, synthetic fibers, Michael, Jen, Chip, Beatles record, Connie, Reed, Arlene, freeze dried foods, Judy, my Parents, birth control pills, Kelly, Bible, Emily, mag, credit cards, rechargeable flashlight, pocket radiation monitor

Detroit Snapshots: Notes From a Thesis



Frederick Church, Niagara, 1857

Reed Stilwell

F. Scott Fitzgerald presents us with Dakota-born Jay Gatz, who, reversing the American Adam's path into a Western frontier unbounded and untainted by tradition and civilization, leaves the good earth of the now-closed Western frontier and is reborn as Jay Gatsby while crossing Lake Superior in a severe storm. Gatsby emerges into a 'valley of ashes' to make a new life in the new frontier of industrial rationality and production.

Gatsby's death due to random chance, like Detroit's recent past, suggests the futility of this notion of a linear, progressive future where our only options for redemption arise out of continued forward motion - excepting, of course, the occasional restorative and/or revisionist excursion into history towards the end of eliminating severe cases of cognitive dissonance with an uncooperative present.

This thesis seeks not to participate in the frenzy of Renaissance schemes for a phoenix-like rebirth of Detroit, which are usually based on narratives of loss as written by a dominant but fading cultural elite surfeited with an abundance of time spent bemoaning the disappearance of some culturally specific 'golden age'.

Rather, this thesis would seek to suggest a way of making in a city whose form and shape is significantly dominated by an ethos of production and consumption in an economy that is predicated on concentric expansion.

Henry Ford Hospital, 1932

This thesis attempts to deny the gaze of civic boosterism and gentrification by riding the sandworms of the production ensemble.

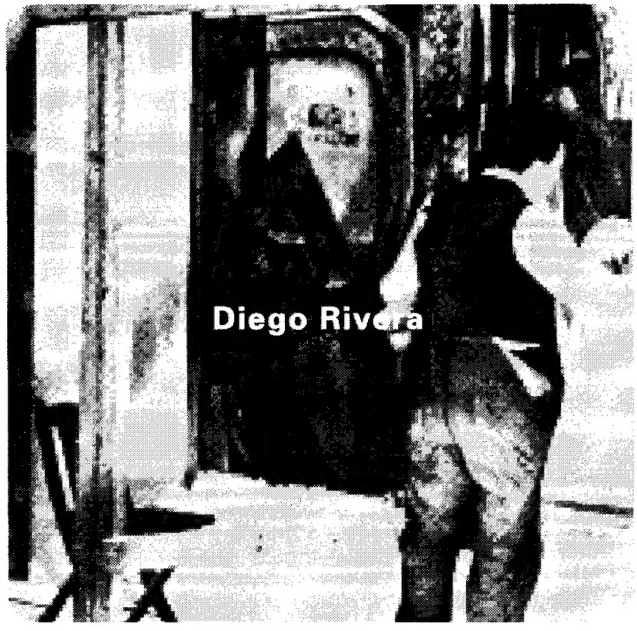
Run over by a bus in her teens, Frida Kahlo was an early victim of modernity and was plagued by recurrent pain from those injuries for the rest of her life. Skeptical of 'progress' in a way Rivera never understood,Kahlo was critical of Detroit's 'assembling' of its citizenry through the production ensemble.

Her many self-portraits deny the male gaze by representing herself as having already been subjected to the gaze: the viewer's gaze arrives "too late". (Mulvey via Smith, 1993)

The painting at left, done after her 1932 miscarriage (Rivera continued to paint), shows in the background a horizon of Detroit, in particular from Highland Park to the Rouge. The desolation of her city eerily prefigures today's condition.

The seeming 'otherness' of life in Detroit (as understood by normative culture, including local suburbanites as well as outsiders and the media) accomplishes a similar denial of the 'gaze' of speculative capital and conventional criteria for real estate valuations, as well as that of roving cultural voyeurs who would seek to valorize Detroit as a 'pariah city' or as a theme park of abandonment.

This thesis shall attempt to deny the gaze of civic boosterism and gentrification by riding the sandworms of the production ensemble. Through judicious spatial ambiguity, piggyback programming, Trojan Horse planning, and outright deception, this thesis will attempt to define a way of making that would seek to utilize the constructs of capital intensive production as bulwarks of indigenous place against the rising tide of increasingly sanitized and placeless mechanisms of gentrification.



Rivera at work

Rivera's Detroit Industry suggests four devices that might be employed in the pursuit of this thesis:

1 **Defamiliarizing the familiar:** As we stand between the two main frescoes in the Garden Court, we recognize that while this looks like the Rouge, it is not the Rouge. Further, the assembly sequence, while apparently in order, is not actually the way the line at the Rouge is organized. Such dislocations and recombinant juxtapositions enhance the opportunity for what Tzonis and LeFaivre refer to as 'strangemaking', which they include as one tool of a 'critical classicism.'

2 **Expressive functionalism:** Rivera makes use of the functioning tool, showing the construction, function, and operation of the various devices (indeed of the whole ensemble), but it is an abstraction of the idea of functionalism as opposed to a functionalism of necessity. This is similar to the 'functionalism' of Sullivan, where he employed (for example, in the Wainwright Building) oversized corner columns suggestive of stability beyond their actual load-carrying roles.

3 **Multiple Narratives:** Rivera employs narratives throughout the work, including various time-step sequences framed within daily, seasonal, and geologic activity as well as historical developments, present-time structurings, and future alternatives.

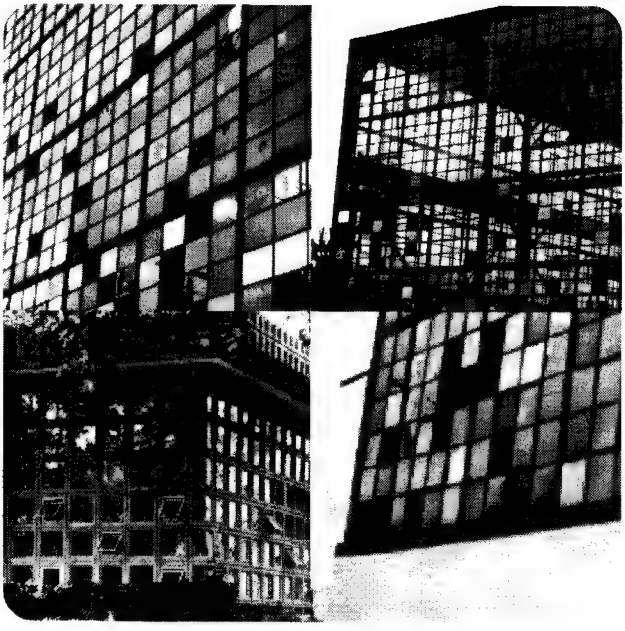
4 **Clinical Criticality:** Rivera's sense of himself as an outsider to this world seems to have imbued his work with a certain restraint and an apparent obligation to realism which to the inattentive observer has suggested either a capitulation to the swaying power of capital or a maudlin naïveté. Rather, a 'resistive complicity' pervades this fresco cycle, enabling a reading of the main panels as a future history presenting a world where opposition has been transformed into collaboration.

Kahn, Ford,and Sorensen inspecting a magneto housing

Q: While living and working in one of modernity's ground-zero sites, is it possible that Albert Kahn, staring into the maw of the mechanical beast, grasped in a moment the futility of the mechanical analogy, which otherwise endured among the International Style's apologists of symbolic functionalism for another 30 years?

Modernists present us with box-like forms, with windows devoid of cornices, flat roofs surrounded by pipe railings, and ask us to accept these as the last word in Architectural design...We find beauty in a machine, for the absence of all not absolutely required for the performance of its work. The same functionalism, however, applied to architecture, and many today believe this is the ultimate in modernism, would make for a very sad community architecturally.

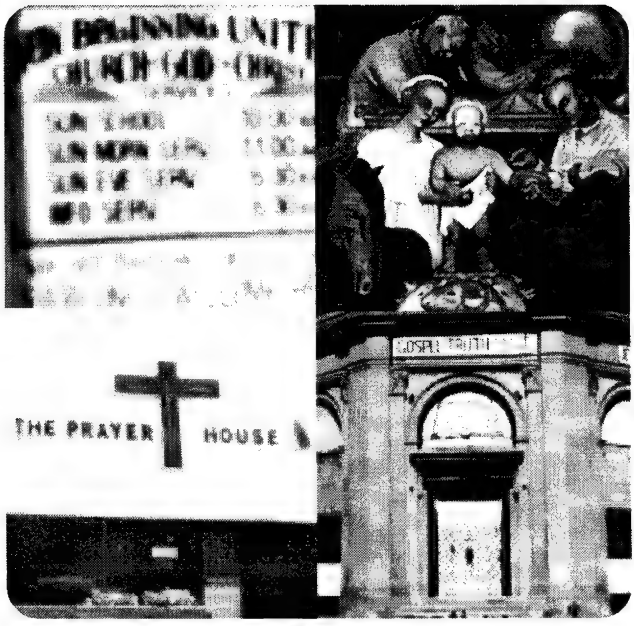
Kahn, 193



Curtain Wall Murals

These vast expanses of glass, valorized by the symbolic functionalists, become more and more opaque over time. As each pane is broken, it is frequently replaced with copper, tin, or steel sheets.

The infill panels then collaborate with the sooty Detroit air through oxidation and chemical deterioration to create a patchwork of pastel hues, reflectivity, and translucence. The original taut, thin skin becomes thicker, tougher, and more ductile with time. Original transparencies become more obscure, and privacies emerge, encouraged by the accretion of opacity.



→ **Storefront Salvation**

"In this city, people *stay* on their knees," a woman told me, and it was true. In Detroit, Christianity - specifically black Protestant fundamentalism - approaches the status of state doctrine. Public school choirs sing gospel songs and classrooms are decorated with pictures of prominent religious personalities. Political meetings begin with prayers and hymns. Clergymen write columns in the newspapers and serve as precinct captains for the Coleman Young machine. In 1988, four of the nine members of the Common Council were ordained ministers.

One day I came across a copy of a form letter sent by a city department to thousands of citizens. It was signed "Yours in Christ."

"How can you send something like this?" I asked the official. "Haven't you heard that there is separation of church and state in America?"

"Maybe in America," the official said with a grin. "But not here."

Chavets, 1990

Party Stores

...the atmosphere in the Tailwind Party Store was relaxed. Customers bantered with the shopkeepers John and his brother Mike, exchanging neighborhood gossip. Over the cash register were hung snapshots of kids from the block.

After each customer left, John provided me with a thumbnail biography. Some were solid working people, others well-off, but many were drug addicts or dealers, teenage mothers and ex-cons. Each story was told in a flat, non-judgemental way. John is a merchant, not a missionary, and he accepts the foibles and weaknesses of human nature philosophically: "go around and see other stores, some of them are filthy", he said. "They treat their customers badly...that's not right. Someone may be a crackhead or even a stone killer, but you should be respectful. He may not have as much as you, but he is still a man. At least, there is that."

Chavets, 1990

Art as Memory and Soundtrack:

The Coolest Thing Ever

listen

Architecture students could learn a thing or two from Janet Cardiff, one of the artists featured in Present Tense, Nine Artists in the Nineties, currently on display at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Architecture students love mnemonic projects. Memory and narrative spaces offer endless possibilities for designing pauses, moments of reflection, and postmodern quotes. In an effort to personalize the dictated space of chipboard and trace, shallowness in design is covered up in pinafores of intended meaning. Site histories, philosophies, and a slew of other referents are etched, mapped and written on the building in an effort to generate memory. The text of the architecture is then read simultaneously as space and narrative. But the students often forget that without a guided tour offered to the fictionalized occupant (such is the verbal tour given to a jury on a review) no matter how compelling the story, the narrative is subsumed by the medium of architecture once the review is over.

Cardiff succeeds in collapsing space and memory by changing the medium. As an artist, and not an architect, she doesn't try to create mnemonic architecture. This doesn't mean that she doesn't mess around a bit with architectural space. In the piece at the SFMOMA, entitled "Chiaroscuro, I" she alters Botta's carefully striped and detailed SFMOMA

Mimi Zeiger

sonically. Cardiff transforms the space by asking the participants of the work to don Walkmans (reminiscent of all the morbidly boring headsets worn for endless spoken gallery tours). She then guides them on a tour of the museum. For the next 11 minutes, the museum is hers. The Rothko's, the Diebenkorn's, even the building itself, are all just props in her installation. They are all backdrops to her narration. The afternoon Jeremy and I were there, the galleries were bustling with tourists, school children, and other drifters who had no obligations on a Thursday. Since we were viewing the artwork together, the docent recommended that we press our Play buttons simultaneously. We stood at the appointed spot, gazing out the window at Sutro Tower, counted to three, and pressed play. At that moment, when her voice filled our heads, we became privy to her narrative space of the building. We yielded our reality to hers and its a darkly romantic place filled with intrigue, loss and sadness.

Using the medium of tape recordings, Cardiff weaves personal fictions, ruminations, film noir suspense, and prior observations of the building into the space. Once we pressed play, Cardiff's breathy voice asked that we look at the hills opposite, and then mysteriously asked that we "walk with her to try to remember what happened." Her footsteps were audible and we walked in time to her pace. Her seductive phrases intermingle recorded ambient sound with real ambient sound, creating a tension as art violates the praxis of life. As you are urged to press the call button for the elevator, the signal button sounds, syncing real life with the recording. She claims that her use of sound to create layered perceptions works by "triggering the effect of an entire movie with just a few words."
It does.

Cardiff creates her three-dimensional sound by utilizing a binaural recording technique. Stereophonic sound is achieved by placing microphones on each side of the head. When the recordings are played back on headphones, the taped sounds blend with the live sounds, effectively soundtracking, and adding layers of drama to the space.

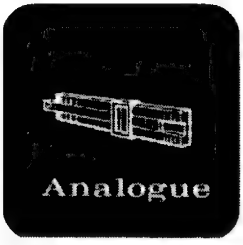
The guided tour at the SFMOMA is small scale in relation to other sound work she has produced to date. Larger, site specific works in Canada, Denmark, and Germany break the boundaries of the museum and take the viewer out into the city on site specific walks. Again, the viewer is guided along the route by Cardiff's mesmerizing voice.

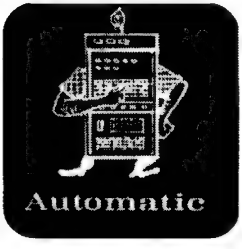
Her work is similar to Smithson's "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey," in that both projects re-read existing conditions. But while in Smithson's work the layers of narrative are just two, the site and the text, Cardiff's work adds several more mnemonic dubs. She intermingles the viewer's own thoughts and heavy breathing from climbing the stairs, with her own memories, overheard conversations, and real time ambient sound. What then transpires is a risk taking tour which jars the normal sensibilities of architecture and memory, creating an exhilaration of unknowing.

The final sequence in Cardiff's piece at the museum leads the viewer to the middle of the grillwork bridge which crosses the SFMOMA's atrium, five stories above the ground and there she confides her desire to jump. The whispered confession, mingled with my own agoraphobia, created an emotional link between the architecture and the art. As her demand to stop the tape recorder echoed in my ears, I felt like both conspirator and puppet. The space of the museum had been challenged via temporal aural narratives not by architectural constructs.

She had easily drawn me into her world, a world of hinted tragedy and half remembrances. I walked with her and listened to her. It was an incredibly intimate experience and when it was over, I almost missed her. As I continued to see the pieces on display, I realized that it was difficult. She had changed my perception of the building. For the rest of that day, the SFMOMA was less a museum than a setting for Janet Cardiff's installation.

Janet Cardiff's work will be on display at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art through January.



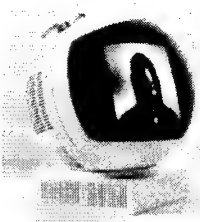


Gardenwindows

new directions/new traditions

Connie Tsao Rigdon

The tea ceremony is a highly artificial cultivation aimed at a certain kind of experience. It requires a person to go indoors in order to restore a sense of nature outdoors. Only through artificial means can one regain a sense of harmony with what is natural. Our daily experience distracts us, pulls us from the experience of pure nature. The tea ceremony is a technology designed to recapture a lost nature.



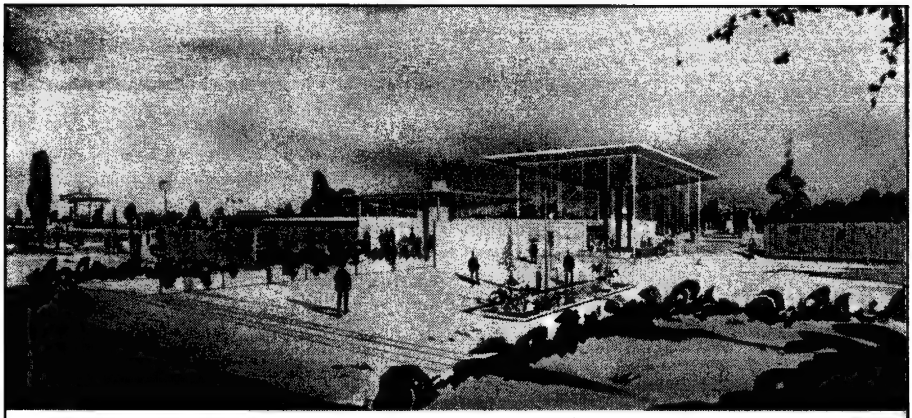
Back to Nature?

In a paper by Michael Heim, "Nature and Cyberspace," he describes nature as a "psychic framework." Daistez T. Suzukis description of the tea ceremony from Zen and Japanese culture serves as an example.

Heim believes that we are finding in cyberspace a second nature, a new home. He finds "cyberspace absorbing nature by actually reviving certain qualities that the human being once felt in and can feel in cyberspace."

Like the tea ceremony, the physicality of an individual who is sitting in front of a computer "is a highly artificial cultivation." First, the placement of the computer monitor directly at eye level with the user. Prior to the common use of computers, reading and writing held a much more subservient position to the individual engaged in such activity. With the computer, however, suddenly language, the written word is held at a position of equality. Secondly, the individual's demeanor is likened to that of someone in a deep meditative state. As if sitting in sazen, the person in front of the computer goes into a trance leaving events that surround his/her physical world to retreat from the presence of mind.

As one who has been much of a skeptic in regards to the technology of the computer, I find that my research and obliged interaction with the technology leaves me with a new sense of appreciation for it. Certainly, there are always questions and paranoias about losing our sense of being and our sense of self when facing the unknown. However, it's the willingness to take these risks and the willingness to become enmeshed within these experiences that brings us closer to who we are as human beings, one of the creatures that is simply trying to survive in this very complex place called nature.



The Underground Home

New York World's Fair 1964-1965

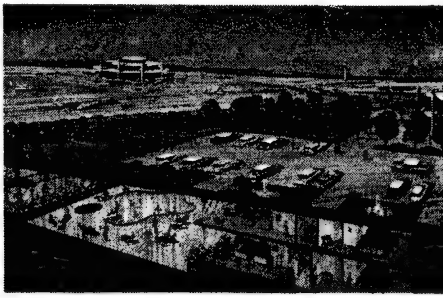
Why Live Underground?

The need for a better life, the will to control one's way of life, has led people to move away from an unhealthy or unpleasant climate, from air polluted by wastes, from invasions of privacy, from the assaults of sounds. The move can be across a continent, a hundred miles, or it can be only a few feet.

Jay Swayze, Underground World Corporation

Developed as a domestic architectural expression of the fallout shelter, post Cuban-Missile crisis, the Underground World Home was meant as a protective shield against both radiation and the evils of airborne pollen. Finally, asthmatics and cold war paranoids could enjoy the comforts of clean living, be they Jell-O in the icebox or gas masks in the pantry.

Mimi Zeiger



Proposed underground construction, serving industry and commerce: (1) Underground Shopping Center, (2) Underground Motel, (3) Underground Restaurant and Night Club.

Design and construction techniques and the actual services of 18 different engineering specialists go into the planning of construction by the Underground World Home Corporation.

At present, UNDERGROUND HOMES completed or in development in various parts of the United States are all custom installations. Currently, construction costs for these Homes in the United States vary between $12 and $24 per square foot, depending on the expense of local labor and materials. The development of prefabricated shells for non-custom installations is expected to radically lower the overall construction costs.

For further information, write the
Underground World Home Corporation,
P. O. Box 18, Mahwah, New Jersey.

The air in underground structures is drawn through a central point assuring absolute control of all climate factors: the breeze of a mountain top, the exhilarating high pressure feeling of a spring day can be created at will.

The Underground World Home is a small ranch house buried, like nuclear warheads, below the surface of the earth. Just the elegant garage pavilion peeks up from the garden. While the underground home offers little formal interest architecturally, the implications uncovered via a discussion of this decorated bomb shelter extend to the present.

The most compelling sales feature of the Underground World Home was its claim for control of the environment. Selling placelessness and escapism as the ultimate realization of every man as king of his castle, the underground home offers a fiefdom with nothing but artificial

Why live **underground?**

The need for a better life, the will to control one's way of life, has led people to move away from an unhealthy or unpleasant climate, from air polluted by wastes, from invasions of privacy, from the assaults of sounds. The move can be across a continent, a hundred miles, or it can be only a few feet.

A few feet underground can give man "...an island unto himself": a place where he controls his own world—a world of total ease and comfort, of security, safety and above all, privacy.

Climate Control: Create your own climate by "dialing" temperature and humidity settings. Pressurize the structure—much as a plane cabin is pressurized—and create any season of the year. Underground, one is free of the outside climate, and health no longer depends on it. Sufferers of chronic colds, asthma, sinus and allergies enjoy relief and the healthy man feels healthier.

The air in underground structures is drawn through a central point assuring absolute control of all climate factors: the breeze of a mountain-top, the exhilarating high-pressure feeling of a Spring day can be created at will.

Atmosphere Control: Live in air completely free of impurities and so clean that housekeeping is reduced to one light dusting a month. Passage of the air through fiber filters and electrostatic precipitators removes smog, smoke, automobile exhaust fumes and similar by-products of urban and suburban life. The constant, automatic flow of thousands of tons of fresh, filtered air ensures ideal ventilation without any danger of harmful cross-drafts.

Sound Control: Sound or silence is yours to choose underground. Thousands of tons of steel, concrete and earth prevent all sound from entering unless you invite it in. The clamor of traffic, jets, noisy neighbors—all are gone with a turn of a switch and you are free to rest in silence, or experience for the first time the full range of sensations that today's sensitive stereo systems are able to produce.

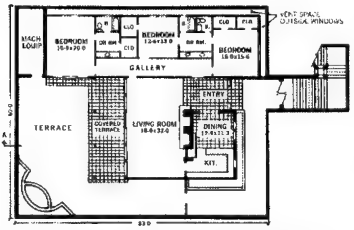
Economy: Underground structures require practically no maintenance, depreciate little, and have a longevity literally longer-than-lifetime. Thus initial costs, which are slightly more than custom-designed surface construction, are quickly offset. Insurance below is a mere one-eighth of normal rates; the costs of utilities in a home surrounded by tons of natural insulation where temperatures vary only a few degrees throughout the year, are about one-third. Finally, underground construction allows double use of real estate; the overhead ground surface may be used for sunrooms, garages, or a playground with enough room left over for a garden or private park.

Security and Privacy: Life underground is free from natural hazards, even earthquakes. An underground structure cannot be destroyed by fire. Its location is less susceptible to theft and other criminal mayhem. Perhaps, most important, you have the comfort of being alone when you wish. Free from the involvement of neighbors, the danger of intruders, the home once again becomes "a man's castle."

turf to grow. In a seductive move to convince buyers that living underground was a viable fantasy, the decor of one's choice could be blended with a favorite mural. The time of day or night dialed with a delicate nudge of the fingertips to meet any mood. Voila, the lights dim and the stars appear. Ursa Major is always right where you left it. The electronic cricket sounds chirp faintly in the background. The placelessness of the underground home was further celebrated, since images of the world at large could be coordinated with each of the rooms, the Chrysler building aglow in the New York skyline gracing the living room, or a candle-lit view of Alcatraz accenting the polished oak of the breakfast nook.

This utopic mastery of context and mood combined with the atomic vision of a good life underground when fast forwarded to now, finds an eerie parallel with architecture created in the computer via combinations of Form Z Renderzone, Photoshop, and others. The most glaring

How to build underground:

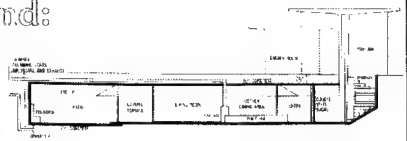


THE UNDERGROUND HOME at the New York World's Fair is developed to serve as a prototype for future underground residential design. Built to incorporate the best and most practical features of a series of pilot homes—one of which has been lived in for over 3 years—the UNDERGROUND HOME offers a complete first hand view of construction and operating details of underground living.

Unique Construction: The entire 10-room home with its "outdoor" terrace and garden areas encased in a concrete-steel shell, is sunk fifteen feet underneath a landscaped garden. The shell, which measures 70' wide by 80' long, provides a floor area of 5,600 square feet and encloses well over *75.5 thousand cubic feet* of air. The World's Fair home is totally moisture proof.

Inside the shell, the living area is divided into "exterior" and "interior" areas. Over the home's ceilings are passageways carrying utility lines and plumbing pipes to provide easy access for repairs and alterations.

Connecting the interior of the shell with the outside is a custom-built air system that draws air from the bottom of a breathing tube or "Snorkel" down through a mechanical



equipment room. There the air temperature, humidity and pressure are regulated at will. From the equipment room, air flows under the floor of the house, circulates through the entire shell and returns to the outside via the "Snorkel." The air filtration system can be modified to cope with overhead dust and sandstorms and even to remove fall-out particles.

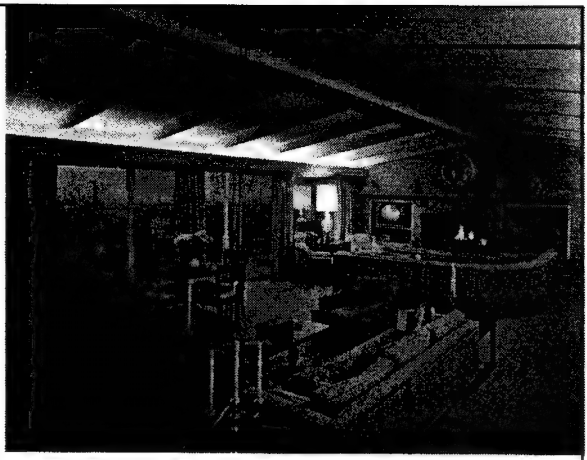
The room also contains a 20KW diesel generator with an automatic, seven second cut-in in case of outside electrical utility failure, a sewage lift and an automatic sewage ejector.

Luxurious Living: Every detail of the UNDERGROUND HOME has been developed to illustrate the luxury which underground living can provide.

"Murals of Light" surround the home. Every room in the house looks out on a panoramic landscape lit by special effects in all shades of daylight and nighttime. Dimmers and a specially designed low-voltage light control system permit a rising sun effect in the kitchen, while a star-filled night blankets the "outdoor" patio.

Carefree Living: UNDERGROUND HOMES at the World's Fair and elsewhere require little or no maintenance—no windows to wash or replace, no exteriors to paint, no roof to repair. The unique air-purification system makes dusting once a month more than adequate. Corroding smog and polluted air cannot affect roofing, metal equipment or masonry in this filtered-air home. Controlled lighting does away with fading of upholstery, paints and carpets, leaving them fresh and cleaner longer.

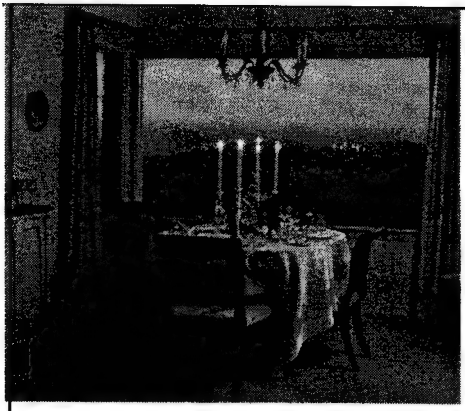
relationship between the Underground World Home and computer rendered architecture involves context. In the case of the underground home it is clear that above ground context is rendered pastoral and neutral in anticipation of the wipe-out of nuclear war. However, in the case of digital architecture, it is not so clear why there is an insistence on the neutral field context rendered in default gray. It would be easy to suggest that the cause of neutral fields springs from limitations in technology (a careful balance of memory storage space, hardware speed/power, and time taken to input data.) But my criticism of the contextless representation stems not from these technical barriers, but from the insistance shown in the work of many of the computer architects that the neutral field is not an issue to challenge or even address. The ability of computer architects to dodge the subject is on par with the inability of the Underground World Corporation to report on its atomic motivations. Forget the questions, technology is sexy. Get seduced by its sleek posibilities.



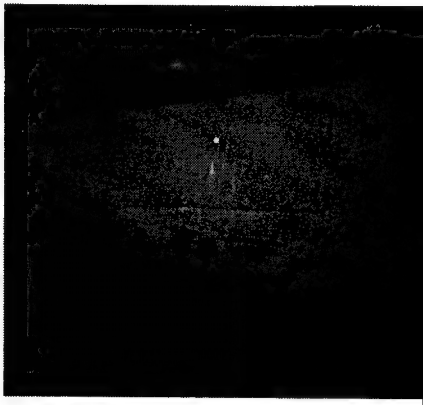
In an underground home, the décor of one's choice can be blended with a favorite "outside" view; the time of day or night may be "dialed" to fit any mood or occasion. Here, in a home recently completed under a Colorado peak, the "outside" views span a continent with San Francisco's Golden Gate to the West and New York's skyline to the East. (1) Entrance by daylight, at sunset and evening, (2) Living Room, (3) Dining Room, (4) Terrace with swimming pool, (5) Terrace's New York City vista.

Computer architects stubborn on a noncontextual representation could be seen as a move by a supposed avant-garde to establish originality in a technological medium which is marked by, even celebrated for, its speed of repetition. The abstraction of context in the space of the computer model operates in much the same way as the grid which is discussed by Rosalind Krauss in the her oft-read essay, "The Originality of the Avant Garde: a Postmodern Repetition." She writes:

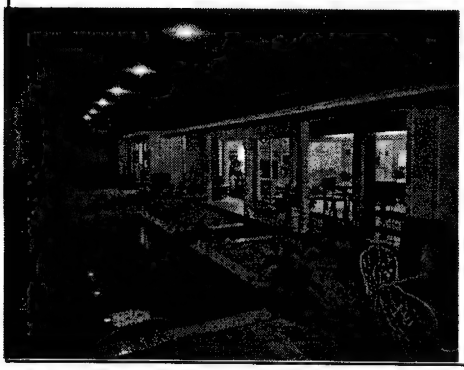
Perhaps it is because of this sense of a beginning, a fresh start, a ground zero, that artist after artist has taken up the grid as the medium within which to work, always taking it up as though he was discovering it , as though the origin he had found by peeling back layer after layer of representation to come at last to this schematized reduction, this graph paper ground, were his origin, and his finding it an act of originality. (p.19)



3



5



4

The space of the computer is, in fact, a three dimensional matrix, a grid masked by washes of color fields. Thus the renderings created ala Form Z, et al, represent knowingly or unknowingly an autonomous form of architecture. Lip service is given to other technological communication systems (e.g. the ubiquitous world wide web) which are touted as the medium to heighten the rendered experience of what are usually, in a retro Venturi manner, simple experiments in form which only seem complex. These computer models in many cases make claims for an audience greater than the pages of coffee table monographs (especially in the case of student projects) but ultimately the claims are undermined by a medium which speaks only to itself in brightly tinted, seductive forms and fancy perspectives.

Walking into the computer lab at SCI-Arc (avant garde types abound here) reveals a mesmerizing series of screens laced with a complex array of lines floating in a

Where can one build underground?

From a Colorado Rockies peak 9,500′ above sea-level to a Long Island swamp, experience in UNDERGROUND HOME construction shows one can build anywhere!

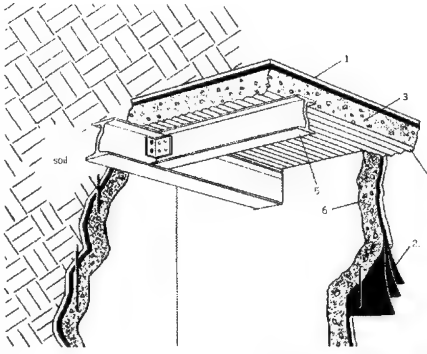
The construction techniques developed by the Underground World Home Corporation make it possible to build a home in any substratum, be it granite or bog land. The secret lies in the oblong, concrete-steel shell that not only seals out all moisture but is engineered to protect the home from earthquakes and other natural hazards for several lifetimes.

Here a cross-section of the shell (right) encasing the UNDERGROUND HOME at the World's Fair reveals the unique construction features of this revolutionary concept of residential design.

Protected against accidental puncture by Celotex panels, the three-layered membrane forms a water-tight seal around the entire shell. Inside the membrane, the concrete-steel shell varies in thickness from 20″ on the floor to between 10″ and 13″ for the walls and ceiling. The 18″ girders, forming the interior frame, support a dead load of over 2 million pounds of soil, permitting the homeowner to build surface structures such as garages and sun-rooms in addition to a small park or garden.

All connections through the shell and its protective membrane, including air-vents, utility lines and sewage pipes, are water sealed and enter at a central point assuring ready accessibility.

This unique, sealed shell can enclose a world of any dimension or content. The thousands of tons of natural soil or rock insulation protecting it from surface sound and the attack of the elements make it an ideal container for any structure in which people work, live, play or study.



1. Celotex protecting panels.
2. 3 layer waterproof membrane.
3. 10″ poured concrete
4. Corrugated steel support for roof slab.
5. 18″ steel girder.
6. 13″ poured concrete siding.

wash of oatmeal colored light. Site maps, photographs and surveys are all emasculated to suit the confines of the seemingly endless graphic space of the computer. Neil Denari, the new director of SCI-Arc, not only values the neutral field, but embraces it (as part of his own underground movement.) He imbues the sheer blankness with a wealth of meaning. In his book Interrupted Projections he writes:

7.4 The Blank Green Surface of Merged Signs

The seafoam green worldsheet is largely blank in the Gallery Ma scheme. Why? Because all is saturated and imploded. Even nature is extrapolated into a color which is both/neither natural or artificial... nature is invested with an arbitrary value which we must act upon in our search for identity. (p.61)

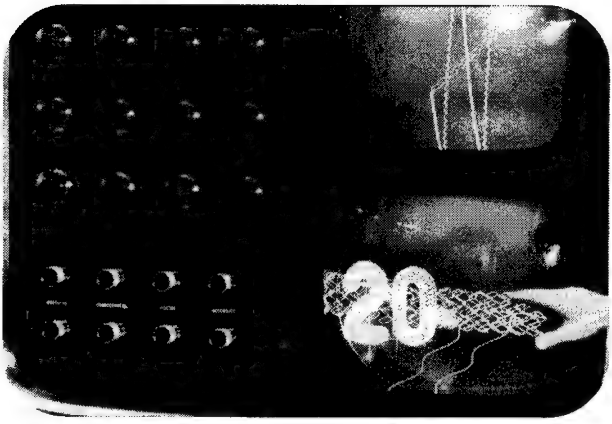
Earlier in his monograph, Denari writes that the "blank green surface" stems from a global capitalist homogeneity and overproduction of signs, thus erasing pre-existing contextual conditions. Yet, his solution of a blank surface seems as much of a reaction to active contextual conditions as burying the ranchburger underground as a solution to alleviate fear of nuclear attack. The condition of capitalist homogeneity is not extremely new to the contemporary condition. The late fifties found the Situationists railing against the production of spectacle, but also more conservative contemporary critics crafted arguments dealing with this abstract space of capital. In 1958, John Keats wrote The Insolent Chariots, an early narrative of loss, and he lambasted early restaurant franchises for destroying the character of Main Street, USA. He further blasts the unifying quality of capitalist life brought about by the automobile. He writes:

Had the Foresights wished, they might have reflected that a curious kind of national square dance goes on night and day in downtown Cleveland, in downtown Denver, in downtown Anywhere, USA. Stop! the light say, and twenty million automobiles jerk to a halt. Walk! the lights say, and seventy million pedestrians obey. Go! the lights say, and twenty million automobiles lurch ahead. (p.204)

Leaving the cultural impact of neutral capitalist space aside, it is possible to trace non-contextual representation through the course of architecture and art history; Malevich had his black square, Mies, his universal space, there are color field painting, and even Denari's argument for the blank surface. It is important to note that these works are acts which specifically call the issue of blankness and field into question. Sadly, other ventures into computer architecture do not address the field of gray, black or even Pantone orange which surround the objects created on screen.

The Underground World Home brochure offered many technical features for better living. Clean, dust-free air piped in, mood lighting, and painted vistas of romantic realities were shown in Technicolor and candle-lit for your enjoyment. The model home featured mannequins poised to enjoy all the comforts of the simulated garden room environment. All is comfortable and good with the underground world, yet the photographs are charged with the feeling that something has gone terribly wrong.

The model home featured mannequins poised to enjoy all the comforts of the simulated garden room environment.



It is a totally misconceived vision of tomorrow, dressed in the finery of 1964 suburbia. By never actually mentioning the threat of armegeddon, the brochure becomes a testament to its certainty. This Stepford wife vision of dwelling parallels the technological advancements in computer architecture which ape the real. Lightsourced renderings, ray-traced images, computerized surface qualities (opaque to transparent), color and texture mapping all aid in mimicking the real.

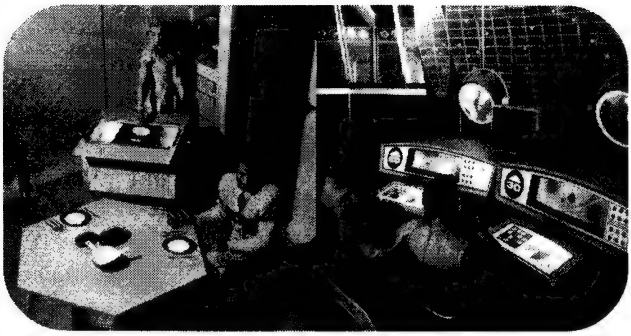
Despite all the illusions of reality drenched in a computer generated luminescent glow, actual materials and construction methods are far from reaching the on screen technological realm. A quick perusal of what is on screen at Columbia's Paperless studio or what is coming out of SCI-Arc reveals an architecture rich in image complexity and seductive form. The modeling programs allow for these works to be viewed from any conceivable angle, giving the works a feeling of reality and masking the fact that the only thing holding up the glorious structures are the constructs of cyberspace.

Like the myth of viability in the Underground World Home, these computer models offer a myth of structural feasibly. An eavesdropped conversation of two tech folks revealed their dreams for a technological advancement within the cyber realm which would hold them to the confines of the material. They gushed over the possibilities of a program which would simulate the properties

of glass, wood, steel, implying that the computer would be the new stomping ground for pushing the possibilities of construction. I fear that more often than not, the computer architect yearns not for approximations of known materials, but has utopic dreams of new materials which would push them outside the bounds of gravity. I see the formal investigations of Greg Lynn as typical of this mentality. His roofs seem made out of an infinitely pliable material eqivalent to Flubber. It is a vision of tomorrow, today, which is not far from a description of the 1964 GM Futurama. "Both GM 'Futuramas' imagined a macro-engineered future: one dominated by technological systems on tremendous scales, in terms of energy and material requirements and yields, as well as sheer physical size and logistical complexity." (p.96, Remembering the Future.)

Hand in hand with the imaginary technological advancement in computer rendering comes a seductive image of the future. The future is Jestons slick, as if technology has reduced all surface to smooth, hard, slightly undulating curves. It is a Elysian dream of unifying form as a means of societal advancement. Just a quick look at the molded plastic lines of Alison and Peter Smithson's 1956 House of the Future, shows that although the forms have changed, status quo remains the same. A housewife of the future puts away the dinner dishes, while a snazzy dressed man of the future sits and waitsto be fed at the tricked out dining room table. A comparison between Denari's Worldsheet project and an old Star Trek set, offers insight into how little the technological dreams for future living have changed. Although the later example gives hints of campiness (perhaps a hindsight reading) both interiors represent a clean, tasteful vision of tomorrow. There is a mutual fixation on the graphics which mark surfaces, on integrated components, and on a space-age formal geometry. It is a view of a new day where the mess of daily life is merged into smooth lines dotted with corporate logos. It is a surface world, which spreads outward, like the blank surfaces which represent context in rendered images and walkthroughs.

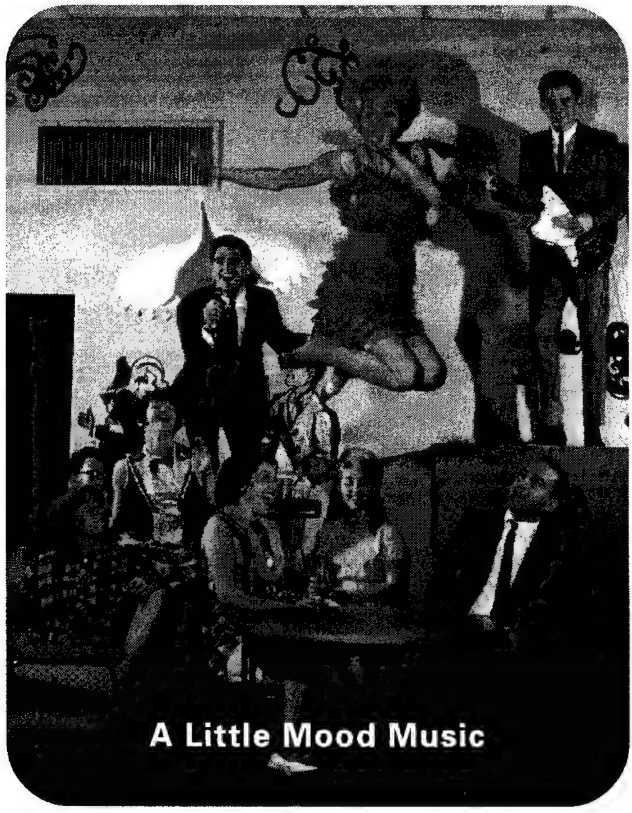
I worry over the implications of this renewed glorification of slicked over corporate ideology, since building for this future is building for the man of the Jet Age. Along with the acceptance of a high Modernist corporate sensibility comes all the baggage of that time period. The rave culture practice of using detournment to



tweak the meanings of such classic designs as the UPS symbol when separated a second time from the source, loses the irony once intended by an underground culture. When the symbols are transferred to the burgeoning computer avant-garde, it is unclear if the corresponding retro values of this form follow. Given this scenario, it is hard to imagine where the other, i.e. women, minorities, the non-martini lunching crowd, fit into this narrative. The Doomsday conception of the Underground World Home was softened by the interior decorations provided by the deft hands of Marilyn Motto. Is the place for the other in the representations of a computer architecture fated to be delegated to flower arranging and cleaning all the miles of smooth, hard, technically provided surface?

It would be a sad case if the promising world of computer architecture becomes an isolated place where man can stick his head to avoid the critical light found in the above ground world. Without checking itself, despite well intentioned utopic wishes, rendered computer architecture will match Jay Swayze's view of the Underground Home.

A few feet underground can give man an island unto himself, a place where he controls his own world - a world of total ease and comfort, of security, safety and above all, privacy.



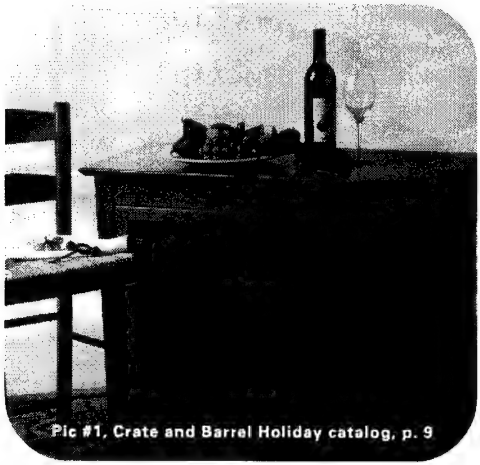
I just moved into a beautiful old house in Oakland, the kind on a tree-lined street with a porch, high, rounded ceilings and dark, wood floors. As I was moving my things in, I could hardly wait to set up my stereo and see how the music would sound as it reverberated off the wood. I plugged in my stereo and placed the Tindersticks' Bloomsbury Theatre record on the turntable and the most amazing sound filled the room. Stuart Staple's voice rumbled off the wood floor and I knew I had a perfect room for listening to music. The music had a thick, warm sound, like Peets coffee being poured from a French press.

Jeremy Xavier

I was living in Santa Monica for awhile, in one of those modern, boxy dingbat apartment complexes. The carpet was thick and gray, the walls were thin and white. All the sound from my stereo got drowned in the carpet. I found that the best music to listen to there was slow, chord-strumming bands, bands like Galaxie 500, Royal Trux, Oasis (zip it, they're messianic), and the Dandy Warhols. Wall of sound bands. Bands that play heroin music, which was cool because I was in Southern California and Heroin Chic was in. The sounds were thick and turgid, too thick to get lost in the carpet.

But as I was setting up my new room, I also found that the new Stereolab record, Dots and Loops, sounded amazing, and I remembered how Charles Long used them to soundtrack his piece, "Amorphous Body Study Center," back in 1995 and thought about how records not only enhance environments, they add another layer to them. With my visit to the SFMOMA only a few days in the past, I was also still thinking about Janet Cardiffís sonic appropriation of Botta's building.

I decided to talk about this with my friend Karen, a local San Francisco DJ who spins at 11, the Elbo Room, 330 Rich Street, the DNA lounge and other places in the area. She also runs Girl About Town, a San Francisco Bay area promotions company. Usually, she is spinning old soul and hip hop, but I've also gone to see the Supersuckers with her as well, so I know she's got range. We looked through recent design magazines, a Better Homes and Gardens magazine from 1964 as well as Crate and Barrel and Pottery Barn catalogs sent to the last tenants of my new house. We saw arrangements that could have been Charles Long pieces and what follows is a few excerpts from our desire to create a soundtrack for these found environments. The conversation took place on 18 November 1997 in my kitchen. My friend Adam sat with us and helped drink the Newcastle Brown Ale. Any further suggestions are welcome. Send them over to loud paper.



Pic #1, Crate and Barrel Holiday catalog, p. 9

Karen: Is that real wood? That's not real fruit. I think maybe something classical. Vivaldi. The Rites of Spring. Whenever I see fake plastic fruit, I think of classical music...people trying to sell cheap things to those who want to buy taste.

Jeremy: You associate Vivaldi with plastic fruit?

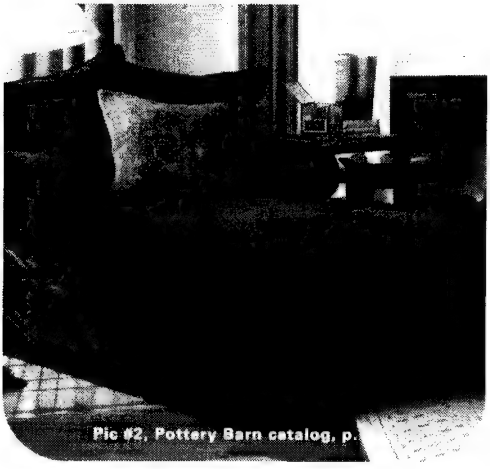
↓

Karen: It's the fake grapes and fake wine bottle. Imitation bacchanal stuff. Pseudo Rites of Spring.

Jeremy: The cabinet is made of "hardwood, wood veneer and MDF board", I wonder how music sounds reverberating off that? I was thinking maybe valium mall shop jazz, like Kenny G. You know, that electric trumpet thing he plays? It sounds like a Casio keyboard he's blowing into. It probably has all the effects programmed into it.

Karen: Kenny G. is not jazz. Ornette Coleman is jazz. Kenny G. is bad pop.

Jeremy: On the facing page in the catalog, there is a Chris Isaak CD placed tastefully on a metal rack, I think the Crate and Barrel people think he is the ideal soundtrack to the environments they create. How versatile he is! From David Lynch films to Crate and Barrel catalogs... I wonder if he has their furniture in his house out in the avenues....



Pic #2, Pottery Barn catalog, p.

Karen: Oh God! That's such an after work, put on your sweats and have herbal tea chair. It's too overstuffed. A chaise should be sleek, like a magic carpet ready to take you anywhere in dreamland.

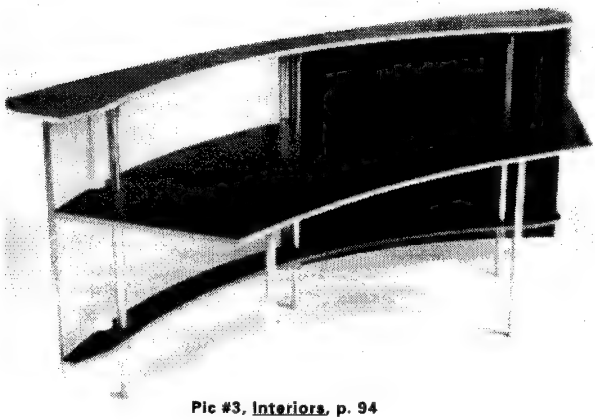
Jeremy: The music?

Karen: I don't know, Sheryl Crow? Something the late 20s, thirtysomethings like. Overstuffed, over-produced, velvety music.

Jeremy: As much as I like Harry Connick Jr., I can't help but hear him when I see this chair. He can write these beautifully romantic songs, but he also just becomes music to wear slippers to for some people. He becomes the sonic equivalent to sweat pants, when he should be all about a 50s Dior dress and pearls or a tuxedo, brill cream and a fresh flower in your lapel.

(At this point my friend Adam suggests the Jewel video where she's crying and cavorting with horses)

Karen: Yes! Jewel. Jewel plays after work music for the masses. They eat salads and listen to Jewel with their legs crossed under them in chairs like this. She's perfect for this chair... You know, I actually kind of like the vase though....

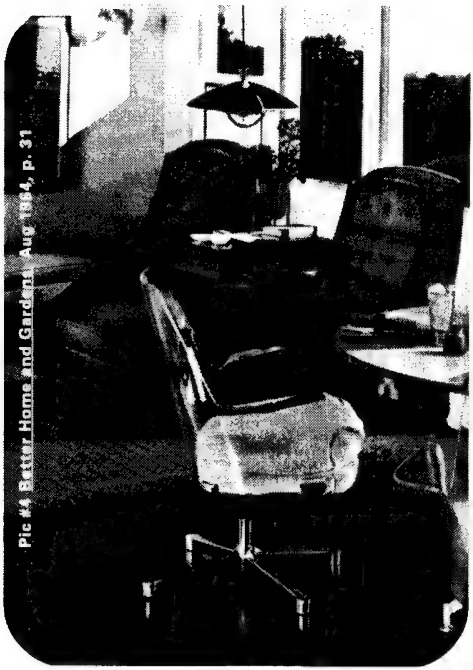


Pic #3, Interiors, p. 94

→ **Jeremy: Does Richard Serra make shelves?**

Karen: It's like a snowboard half pipe. I hear the Fat Wreck Records sound. NOFX. No Use For A Name. The curves are perfect for 3 chord bliss. Something punk.

Jeremy: I see modernism. Maybe Paul Weller's first record with Jacko Peake playing the flute or the new Kinetics EP. Something smooth and soulful to slide along the curves. The clean, arcing design deserves modern soul.



Karen: The space age bachelor pad...well, with two chaise lounges, I guess this is space age couplehood.

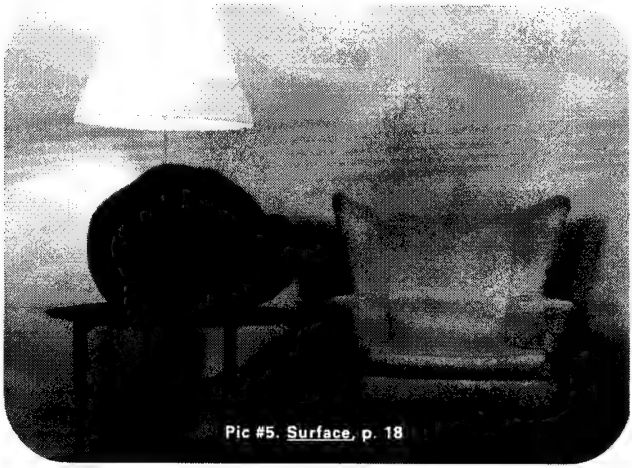
Jeremy: The text says that for many years chaise lounges were for the bedroom, but they are now hip to put in the living room. So, I guess Pottery Barn is 34 years past being hip.

Adam: And they don't have cool cigarette lighters in their lay outs like the one on the table.

Karen: I hear E.V.A. Jean Jacques Perrey. That tripped out, 1960s Moog music. Futuristic French lounge jazz. The stuff that sounded amazing on modern hi fi equipment.

Jeremy: I was going to say Stereolab, but I guess E.V.A is more authentic. Definitely futuristic. Esquivel, too. Music to listen to because you saved time making a casserole and your dish washer is doing the dishes. With the mod cons, you have a chance to relax in the chaise lounge and smoke cigarettes lit by cool table-top lighters.

Wasn't the future cool?



Pic #5. Surface, p. 18

Jeremy: This is actually a piece by Charles Long, the guy who used Stereolab in '95, not an intended living arrangement.

Karen: Ultra Mod. The Small Faces. Maybe Miles Davis...

Jeremy: Why Miles and not Dizzy?

Karen: Miles had style. His records all had a look and style. Others recorded sessions, Miles spent time on the look and feel of the record to get an overall style. This piece is completely styled in the same way.

It has the look of modern jazz.

The 1939 New York World's Fair sparkled under the streamlined title, "World of Tomorrow." The General Motor's pavilion featuring Norman Bel Geddes and his Amazing Vision of Tomorrow, the Futurama, was the hit of the Fair. Fairgoers would spend eight hours in line waiting to get a glimpse of the future. Flushing Meadows was transformed. The shimmering icon of the World's Fair, the Trylon and Perisphere conveyed a future led by winged technology, not victory. A testament to Sloanist principles and the fine placement of chrome, the "World of Tomorrow" seemed a fine place, indeed. Twenty-five years later, the 1964/65 New York World's Fair, under the leadership of slum clearing Robert Moses, opened to the world of today. The dawn of the new fair lit a world darkened by atomic sensibilities, saturated with consumer goods and still smarting from Kennedy's assassination, the Cuban-Missile Crisis and the beginnings of U.S. actions against Vietnam (1965.) It was a world of keeping up with the Joneses, Brillo Pads, Good Housekeeping Seals of Approval, and the Shangri-La's 'Leader of the Pack' at the top of the charts. This new fair bore the weak willed banner, "Peace Through Understanding."

April 22, 1964. The Fair opened to vaudevillian hisses and boos by both the public and architecture critics. The opening day of the Fair, the 300th year of New York being named New York, the Congress on Racial Equality demonstrated to bring attention to "the melancholy contrast between the idealized, fantasy world of the fair and the real world of brutality, prejudice, and violence in which the American Negro is forced to live." (p.1051, New York 1960) As if in celebration of New York's namesake anniversary and an action which flew in the face of the Fair's peaceful theme, 300 demonstrators were arrested.

Vincent J. Scully, Jr. lambasted the Fair in a Life Magazine from July 31, 1964. The cover of the issue was graced by a toothy, mop-haired photograph of the Fab Four. It was the year in which they performed on the Ed Sullivan show, the month when they were causing a ruckus at every show they played. In San Francisco, the authorities had to use tear gas to soothe the throngs of screaming Beatlemaniacs, but Vincent J. Scully, Jr. paid them no mind. He had the future of architecture on his mind. In his piece entitled, "If this is Architecture, God Help Us," he wrote:

Mimi Zeiger

"World's Fairs give architects a chance to do two things: to put up more advanced building than can be easily constructed elsewhere, and to suggest new solutions to the problems of city planning as a whole. London's Crystal Palace, built in 1851 to house the first world fair was the progenitor of every one of our glass walled office buildings.... In 1964 we badly need some fresh ideas in both departments. But if the current extravaganza in Flushing is the best we can do, then God help us and I doubt whether any fair was ever this crassly, even brutally conceived as this one."

Other critics from the New Yorker and Time, for example, found the Fair off-putting from its sheer advertising spectacle. The editors of Time wrote of the Fair that "much of it, to be sure has a tacky, plastic, here today-blown-tomorrow look, as if it was a city made of credit cards." (p.1031, New York 1960) No longer were the products and corporations masked in the idealism of future invention or technology. The Fair was explicitly used as a means to market directly to a large number of people in search of entertainment. This commodification of culture was by no means invented at the 1964/65 World's Fair, it is just an example in a series of societal changes due to commodification via the advertising of consumer goods such as automobiles, which had been developing through the Fifties. Yet, this fair, adorned in its crass and brutal architecture, provides architectural examples which take on the attributes of the product the building promotes. It is a moment still linked to Cold War corporations, and has yet to develop into the Volkswagen driven countercultural revolutions and youth markets. There is a blurring between building and sign which would be later valorized by a slew of Postmodern critics and philosophers. What is important about this fair of Unispheres, Bel-Gem waffles and Pepsi signs, is that there is a shifting of both form and concept from the High Modernist style of Park Avenue, to a more popular approach to design. The Joneses of Anywhere, USA were not appalled by the architectural manifestation of consumerism on display, but they were delighted by the hubbub. Emerson Goble, the editor of Architectural Record said, "...attendance figures are amazingly high, and great queues form at many of the exhibits. Highly automated spectaculars are bewitching millions of sightseers. So who needs good design?" (p.1032, New York 1960)

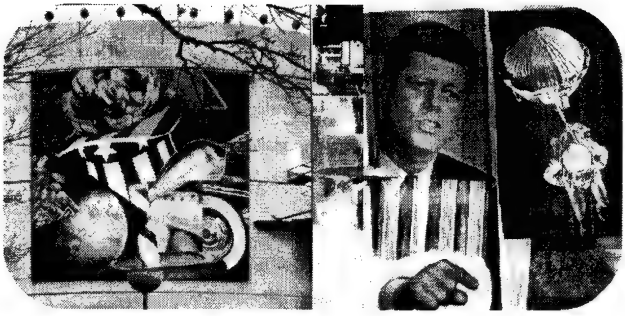
One of the most successful pavilions at the Flushing Meadows site, at least from an architecture critic's view, was the New York State Pavilion, designed by Philip Johnson and Richard Foster. The pavilion, according to Rosemarie Haag Buetter, in Remembering the Future, "seemed to be a reinterpertation of one of three proposals of Frank Lloyd Wright produced as a defiant gesture when he was not invited to participate in the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition" (p.112) The pavilion featured a huge, circus-like tent. The roof of the "Tent of Tomorrow" was created out of cables and plastic simulated stained glass panels. It was then supported by large concrete columns. The tent structure created a space for a giant plastic map of the state. Two lollipop towers sprung up to the side of the tent, and held an observation platform and a restaurant. Of note, was the exterior of the Theaterama. Johnson, himself, commissioned ten artists to create murals to decorate the rounded concrete facade. The move to place work by Pop artists Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Robert Indiana, Robert Rauchenberg and James Rosenquist, other artists such as Ellsworth Kelly and Liberamn, as wall as sculptors Peter Agostini, John Chaimberland, and Robert Malliart, on the facade was due in part to Robert Moses' call to integrate art into the Fair pavilions, rather than to waste ground space on it. To put a different spin on Moses' commandment, it is possible to quote New York Times art critic John Canaday who wrote, "contemporary art belongs incorporated within contemporary life." (p.115, Remembering the Future)

The inclusion of Pop Art images within a field which

already was decidedly Pop, highlighted the tension between an art world trying to comment on the world of consumption and mass production and the bloated success of actual marketing and advertising. At the time, Max Kozloff commented on the effect the artworks had when blown up into mural sized pieces. "Deprived of their intimate gallery atmosphere, the silk-screen-transformed color photographs and billboard montages of [Rauchenberg and Rosenquist] are returned to their appropriate point of origin, and the displacement which once gave them so much pungency is minimized. These works of art cease to be creative expressions intruding into the world of manufacture, and become instead equivocal flora of that world." (p.1036, New York 1960)

The mural which stirred up the most controversy was the contibution by platinum wigged, Andy Warhol. Twenty-five grainy and distorted images of 13 men from the New York City Police Department's most wanted list gazed stonily out from the series of 40" x 48" panels. Fearing lawsuits, since some of the men were Mafiosi cleared of charges, Fair officials asked that the mural be taken down. Warhol countered by proposing twenty-five silk-screened portraits of a saber tooth Robert Moses (see cover.) Philip balked. Ultimately, the solution was to cover the mural in a coat of silver paint. When the images ghosted through the paint, it was covered with a black cloth, and then finally taken down. Art historian, Robert Rosenblum, wrote later that Warhol's piece was "too disturbingly real to survive the Fair's glut of super annuated American dreams."

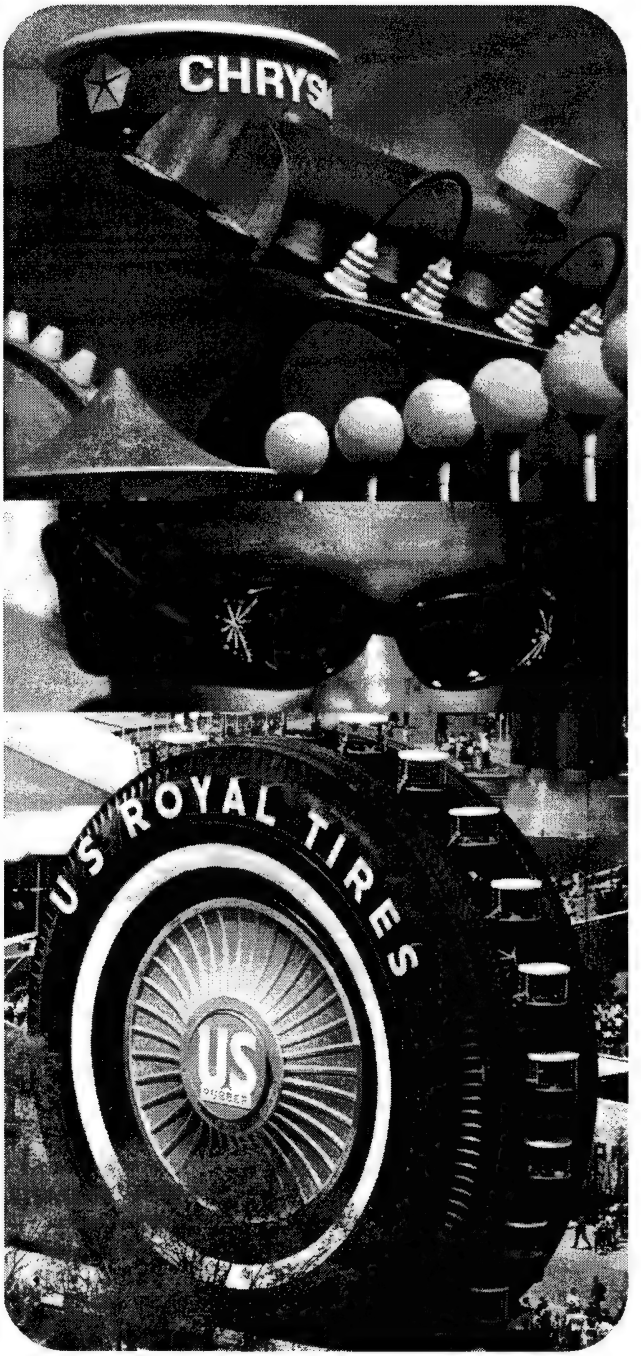
James Rosenquist's 20'x20' mural combined images of car parts, Coke bottles, female legs, and an Uncle Sam top hat adorned with stars and stripes. The piece, typical of his work, commented on the commercial links between the desire for consumable corporate goods, sex, and the American dream. Via juxtaposition his piece highlighted the glut of culture industry styling over technological advancement. But the piece was subsumed by the mechanisms of advertising it sought to question. Even Robert Rauchenberg's combine, which featured three images of Kennedy, originally a commentary on media, merchandise and power, was reinterpreted at the Fair into an homage to the recently assassinated president.



Signs, signs, selling popcorn, soda pop, and popguns decorated all sheds...

It is at this moment when Pop Art has reached its apex and then is absorbed back into the culture from which it sprang, that the architecture of the 1964/65 World's Fair, treading a path somewhere between high art architecture and the corporate commercial world it represents, falls into the realm of Pop. The Fair architecture was routinely blasted for its cheap, throwaway commercialism. Banners screaming for the fairgoer to by a souvenir hat, or signs, signs, signs, selling popcorn, soda pop, and popguns decorated all sheds and made architecture critics cringe. Not content just to add ephemera to create product identification, buildings took on the forms of the consumer goods they represented. The 1939/40 Fair featured an abstracted package of Wonder Bread. The pavilion, designed by S.O.M., was painted with the company's orange, red, and blue dots. And the National Cash Register Company pavilion, designed by Walter Dorwin Teague, was shaped like a building sized cash register, yet the kitsch of these pavilions was taken to a whole new level at the 1964/65 Fair.

Morris Dickstein, in Remembering the Future, writes "One of the reasons [that] Pop Art was thoroughly overshadowed was that, as several observers remarked, the Fair itself was a gigantic piece of Pop Art." (p.36) The General Motors pavilion designed by Albert Kahn Associates, featuring a reprised Futurama designed by Walt Disney, was described by Scully as "a Detroit-style marriage between a tail-fin and a hubcap." The vision of the future the Futurama promoted was, according to Scully, "stale where not actively revolting....All those roads! - the American archetype of movement designed to strangle us all."


CHRYS
U S ROYAL TIRES
US
RUBBER

The IBM pavilion, designed by Saarinen Associates and Charles Eames, was written off by Scully as "a huge eagle's egg, heavily laid on a thicket. I can imagine the big bird flapping off, squaking and casting frightened glances behind it." (The pavilion was actually designed to resemble the new IBM invention of a typewriter ball.) While Scully was able to make allusions to the Pop qualities of these pavilions, they were really just the Pop aesthetic abstracted to meet a high art corporate styling. Two other pavilions, the U.S. Rubber Ferris wheel, designed by Shreve, Lamb, and Harmon Associates, and the Chrysler pavilion, designed by George Nelson, fully embraced the over-the-top panache of Pop Art and its low art implications, and created two of the most notable pavilions at the Fair.

Located amidst the pavilions of the 3 major automobile manufactures in the transportation area of the Fair, the U.S. Rubber Ferris Wheel, shaped like a giant tire, dwarfed the surrounding exhibits. The eighty foot high white wall tire was even dubbed the "winner of the P/A Pop Art Award." (p.1052, New York 1960) Iconic, like a Warhol can of Campbell's World's Fair soup, the Ferris wheel the promoted U.S. auto industry from the wheels up. Another example of the transferred desires used in automobile advertising, the tire was a carnival ride. Riding on it was a fun time, so it would be inferred that riding on your own four tires would be even better.

The Chrysler pavilion, a hypertrophied model of a car can best be described by Scully. He writes:

It is the surprise of the Fair. It is Pop Art at its best, and presents Detroit with welcome wit and irony. There is a 'working' engine you can walk into and a demented mock-up of a car of the future you can examine from below - the bucket seats are buckets. There is also a zoo of rickety and noisy animals made out of auto parts. Some of them looking absurdly like Port Authority helicopters clattering about next door.

More than just upping the ante of fair spectacle from printed advertising to built form, these "Pop Architectures" linked the mechanisms of advertising to the built environment. Along the way, they happened to circumvent the critical approaches of Pop Art all together. The Pop pavilions of the 1964/65 New York World's Fair broke from the Modernist abstraction, and became moments in commodity culture which on a elephantine scale, turned building into sign into object of desire.

Of Bare Feet and Velvet Slippers

Oscar Wilde toured America. He carted his velvet slippers and silk stockings through the West and gave talks to local society women. His eccentric dressing and witticisms won over his audience. He had heard about Walt Whitman and met with Walt and proclaimed him a genius. The Beatles toured America. They carted their lapel-less suits around the US and played to screaming teenage girls. They won people over with their stylish clothes and their own witticisms. Later, George Harrison heard about the summer of love and came to San Francisco to dig the scene. He walked the Haight/Ashbury neighborhood, played a little guitar in Golden Gate Park and proclaimed the happenings to be nothing more than pimpled and drugged youth. The Rolling Stones have toured America several times. Their 1972 tour was documented by Robert Frank in an unreleasable film depicting a little too much sex, drugs and rock n' roll. The Sex Pistols toured America, forsaking New York in order to play to the "real rebels", the Southerners. Their eccentric clothes and obnoxiousness got them beat up.

It goes on and on. Britain's talents have always sought their fortunes in America. From Oscar Wilde to Noel Coward to Noel Gallagher. Since the initial British invasion of the 60s, they have sent constant battalions to our shores. By the mid seven-

ties, first wave British invaders like the Who and the Stones were playing to arenas full of, not screaming girls, but of fist pumping teenage boys. The invasion was over, Britain had established a presence in our popular musical culture that would wain from time to time, but never leave.

After the United States eradicated the British from the charts in the early 90s with American integrity, work boots and grit, Oasis crashed through and dragged Blur, Supergrass and even Pulp with them. The unrelenting marketing folks at Sony Music had done their job.

Formed in the Manchester town of Wigan, the Verve were around before the current wave of Brit Pop, instead, they were shoe gazers, part of the Madchester scene of the late 80s/early 90s. They were quietly earning the reputation as the best band in England, playing what one critic called "the liquid essence of rock and roll." The music had one foot (bare) in Psychedelia and another foot (suede Adidas) in pop. Who else has opened for both Oasis and the Black Crows and made the parings seem natural? They quit in 1995 after the brilliant A Northern Soul LP, which wasn't Northern Soul music at all, but slow, heavily guitar-effected, reverbed pop.

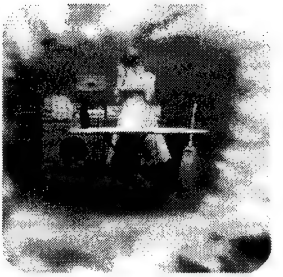
After reforming this year and releasing easily one of the greatest records ever, Urban Hymns, they achieved soaring success in Britain. American audiences picked up on them as well. The song 'Bittersweet Symphony' and its video were ubiquitous in the month of November. British magazines Q and Vox both had the Verve's vocalist Richard Ashcroft on their cover. Amid the frenzy, they came to America.

On the 20 November 1997, they arrived at the Warfield Theater in San Francisco to play a sold out show with DJ Wayne as the warm up. They had placed two huge screens by the stage and a slide projector flashed pictures of the band as well as their song lyrics. DJ Wayne spun a wide array of music from Sly and the Family Stone to melds of sitars, Rolling Stones riffs and drum and base. In short, he was amazing. Promptly at 10, the Verve walked out on stage and into the song 'A New Decade.' Richard Ashcroft took off his shoes and they played for two hours. It was a confident, but not cocky show. Early in the set they played the hit 'Bittersweet Symphony', but they did it without the self mockery that so many bands often use to disqualify their hits. They simply played it as they played every other song, as though it were one of the greatest songs ever written. Which, in fact (Stones sampling debacle aside), it is.

The show was awash in fog and dimly lit. The band was knee deep in smoke and green and purple light. Nick McCabe's guitars dominated the sound. They were loud and hazy and provided a glorious din which Ashcroft would play absolutely clean acoustic guitar over. The sound was woozy, but not tuneless. McCabe controls his guitar sounds with massive effect mechanisms and uses his guitar almost like a keyboard. Peter Salisbury's heavily reverbed drums echoed through the thick sound. The rest of the band hid in the fog. Ashcroft gyrated and threw elbows down front. He was lost in shoeless abandon.

After playing mostly songs from A Northern Soul and Urban Hymns, they walked off stage. Richard Ashcroft came back out and played three acoustic songs including 'History' as well as 'Space and Time'. The band came back out an they finished off with Urban Hymn's powerful closer 'Come On'. It's a bit harder than their other material and they played it harder still. Ashcroft swung his arms and danced around as the lights swirled and the feed-back droned. "Come On" he yelled and motioned to the crowd. As he walked off stage, it was all the security could do to hold back each of us who wanted to follow.

Thinness.



Mimi Zeiger

As I sit here and write, the table is coated with days of newspapers. Poking out from the pile is an article outlining the side effects of Phen-Fen and other such diet sirens which sing songs of beauty and eternal thinness. The headline screams "heart conditions, cancer, memory loss," all in pursuit of thinness. It is the third article in the last few weeks. Each headline compounds the terrible affects caused by screwing with mother nature. Since I am in Los Angeles, I can't decide if this article is having any impact on the those in search of the perfect bod. Body sculpting is an art form in this town of flared hip-huggers and bobbed noses.

I think of the exhibition of carved ice sculptures shown in the freezer section of a Chinese grocery store in West LA. It closed just last weekend due to vandalism. (Perhaps it was a crazed plastic surgeon armed with a scalpel.) And I think of the distracting night I spent at the Dresden Room where a woman with an age only deceived by her hands, paraded her newly crafted buttocks around the martined room. She wore a pair of light blue microfiber pants,

the same color as the carved ice, the rear zipper aping the crack of her ass. I imagine the perky tailfeathers of the ice swans dripping with envy at her SoCal masterpiece. I wonder if the effects of the former wonderdrug are getting as much press in any other city.

Thinness has a home here. It goes far beyond the biological conditions. Never can be too rich or too thin. Thinning hair. Or over on Fairfax, pastrami, thinly sliced. It permeates the entertainment industry. No, it is the soul of the industry. Remember, the camera adds fifteen pounds. Thinness is the depth of celluloid, movie screens, billboards which feature Angeline, and Brad Pitt's intellect. It is a scrim which connotes display. Thinness as the desirable object, thinness as communication.

Thinness is so pervasive, that it carries through to the architecture. It happened early. The wafer-like walls of early sound stages did nothing more than define the cinematic space inside. Perhaps those walls kept the flimsy sets from blowing over as the Santa Ana winds blew through the groves of orange trees. Early modernists, landing in the Los Angeles oasis (Shindler, Neutra, later Lautner or Ain) were escaping the heavy masonry of eastern climes. They looked at the nakedness, and wanted thinness. Open to the sky, the land, the desert, their houses are lightweight mediators from inside to outside. The thinness of walls advocates a life where nature is on display, yet controlled.

What eventually transpired within these Hollywood and Silverlake homes built for screenwriters and directors, is that thinness was inverted. The same devices used to bracket the landscape became elements to frame the inhabitants. Poised in the living room, gazing off to the pool, they sipped gin and tonics and smiled Life Magazine smiles. These were savvy Hollywood types, they knew how to frame a shot.

Beatriz Colomina in her essay "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" analyses Le Corbusier's villas in regards to the photographic or cinematic spacial implications, but her observations can be transferred to the thin Los Angeles condition. She writes "...everything in these houses seems to be disposed in a way that continuously

Never can be too rich or too thin.

Split Wall: Domestic Kate.

throws the subject towards the periphery of the house. The look is directed to the exterior in such a deliberate manner as to suggest the reading of these houses as frames for a view." Later, she qualifies this reading of the house. Rather than the house just being a frame for dominating the landscape, the framing mechanisms as represented in the film "L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui" (1929) directed by Pierre Chenal with Le Corbusier, become thin devices which simultaneously capture landscape and the body within the villa.

There is also a figure of a woman going though a house in this movie. The house that frames here is Villa Savoye....The camera shows the house from the distance, and object sitting in the landscape, and then pans the outside and the inside of the house. And it is there, halfway through the interior that the woman appears in the screen. She is already inside, already contained by the house, bounded. she opens the door that leads to the terrace and goes up the ramp toward the roof garden, her back to the camera. She is wearing informal clothes and high heels and she holds the handrail as she goes up, her skirt and hair blowing in the wind. She appears vulnerable. Her body fragmented, framed not only by the camera but by the house itself, behind bars. She appears to be moving from the inside of the house to the outside, to the roof garden. But this outside is again constructed as an inside with a wall wrapping the space in which an opening with the proportions of a window frames the landscape. (p.103.)

The legacy of the Hollywood types is still with us. Last April, Harper's Bazaar ran a story entitled "L.A., the List." Glistening in the glossy pages were the words "The International Style Is In." Which were followed by the L.A. version of the cannon of architects: Wright, Gill, Ellwood, Lautner, Neutra, Shindler, Ain, Frey, and Soriano. The more interesting list was the one entitled "People Who Live In International Style Houses." Apparently Joel Silver, Kelly Lynch, Ann Magnuson, Bob Hope, and Ricardo Montoban all live in houses where it would be ill advised to throw stones. The same issue of the magazine ran a fashion spread entitled "Pacific Time," featuring Kate Moss in "sexy cool" slip dresses. Posed against the floor to ceiling windows of a Lautner home in the Hollywood hills, both are captured in all their anoretic glory. The camera adds fifteen pounds.

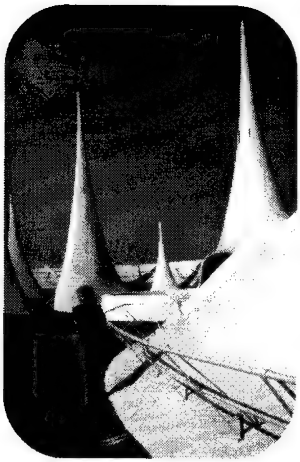
Dingbat developers replaced the large glass expanses of the Hollywood hills with sliding glass patio doors. They substituted five point inspired ribbon windows with aluminum framed holes in the wall. They were careful enough to maintain the thin as a rail, stucco walls for their apartment buildings. Eschewing the modern white walls for baby pink or harvest gold, building colors which matched the color schemes of Cadillacs and Fridgedaires. Appliances took over where the aesthetics were shallow. The economics of building was happily affected by a less is more approach to materials.

Up and coming Hollywood starlets took well to the dingbats. Would it be too bold to imply a comparison? Both are works for cheap material, standing on gawky pole thin legs, and are tarted up with names like "Debbie Den" or "Bali High." Is it shocking to say that both have plenty of room between their skinny legs to house an obscenely powerful sportscar? The builders of these apartments must have known their clientele well. The kitchens in these apartments are squeezed into neat little corners (efficiency) or in the case of bachelor apartments, eliminated except for the firehazard hot plate in the bathroom and the bar fridge doubling as a bedside table. The builders knew that it really doesn't take much to assemble a diet plate, just two leaves of iceberg lettuce, four carrot sticks, a lusty mound of cottage cheese cradled in a pineapple ring and a maraschino cherry on top, looking all the world like a perky nipple.

When I first arrived in Los Angeles, fresh from the foggy bohemia of San Francisco, these flimsy structures scared me to death. The stark, SoCal light made everything look temporary and precarious. While earthquakes are just as common in the Bay Area as in LA, I still had visions from the CNN coverage of the Northridge earthquake of these stork-like creatures collapsed. Their emaciated legs spread awkwardly in the air like an budding actress who met up with the wrong kind of agent. My housemate and I looked woefully at dozens of the leggy buildings as we searched for a place to live.

I railed endlessly against these thin apartments. I was both aesthetically appalled

Their emaciated legs spread awkwardly in the air like an budding actress who met up with the wrong kind of agent.



and also I feared the wrath of mother nature. Unknowingly, I sounded like Frank Lloyd Wright during his rant against the cardboard house. He wrote "...most new "modernistic houses manage to look as though cut from cardboard with scissors, the sheets of cardboard folded or bent in rectangles with an occasional curved cardboard surface added to get relief." My housemate and I found ourselves buying heavy hipster shoes at the local mall, trying desperately to alleviate the depression caused by scoping out one too many thin buildings. The car doors of the perky Civic became our touchstones of sanity. The reassuring sound they made when closed presented some notion of fatness. The doors of the sherbet colored buildings we knocked at with hope and increasing skepticism echoed hollowly.

Finally, we found a place suitably zaphtig. Shannon, the Rubenesque manager led us around the apartment, sliding closet doors and giving us colorful commentary. She let us know that in no uncertain terms would a Scandinavian bed designed by Ikea stand up to Saturday night at home in her apartment, but apparently the building, was holding its own. Built in 1991, it is ugly (definitely not resembling the cute bungalows across the street) and it is required by more recent building code regulations not to fall down. It is a simple building, two double story buildings flank a parking lot. The entry to the units is on the outside, away from the parking. The living room windows face the street, while the bedrooms the inner parking court. Still, the apartment is dingbat derivative and its historical thinness manifested itself soon after we moved in.

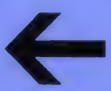
The first inklings of thinness came the weekend after we unpacked. At three in the morning, the orgasmic

moans of a friendly neighbor bounced off the walls of the parking lot and stirred up dreams of a Bruce Goff revival. The ideals of thin California living seemed impossibly shortsighted, and I wondered if Shindler planned for any sound muffling devices for his outside sleeping porches. Perhaps this was the unknown factor which changed his design approach and not the chill.

The noisy neighbor seems to have fallen into a dry spell, but the thinnest part of the building remains constant, the window in the living room. The window is huge. It dwarfs the room like a drive-in movie screen dwarfs Culver City. Like Princess Grace framed on the screen's surface, I sit at the table, drink my coffee, and watch the street. I vicariously claim Ruby, neighbors dog, who gets to play outside of a quaint yellow bungalow all morning long. The words of wise nurse Stella in Rear Window crackle against my ears. "We have become a race of peeping toms. What people otta do is get outside their house and look in for a change. Yes, sir."

From my side of the window, the house opposite is the epitome of domestic bliss. It lives up to Hollywood perceptions of "house." Although Ward and June are replaced with an aging hippie couple. The window which frames Santa Monica's own American Gothic is thin aluminum with pasted on mullions. The mullions are to disguise its dingbat cum ribbon window past. The ledger the window sits on is just five inches thick, the glass flush with the outside wall. From the street it looks has all the dimension of a movie screen stretched taut against the blue-gray building.

I had always assumed that I was the voyeur in this tableaux of thinness, but one Saturday morning at our neighbors garage sale I learned otherwise. I crossed the street to finger a pair of vintage curtains that I had spied earlier, and my housemate and I were greeted warmly with "Oh, you're the people in the window. We finally meet." So, even as I sit here and lick the chocolate frosting out of sandwich cookies, I am participating in the thin Los Angeles discourse. I gaze out at the lawn which needs a bit of a trim remember that the camera adds fifteen pounds.



Read the prophecies of R. B. Fuller - written in1962!

WEEKLY ARCHITECTURE
NEWS
December 1,1994 99¢ /$1.09 CANADA 70p UK

SECRET PREDICTIONS

. . . OF AMERICA'S GREATEST VISIONARY!

LAST PHOTO of geodesic dome, taken in 1962.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED . . . A CHILLING look into the future by famed architect who died years ago!

ARCHITECTURE'S HOTTEST GOSSIP

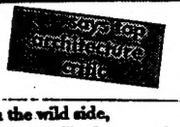
LET O.J. GO!

He's going to get rich from the murders anyway

TURN The Juice loose! O.J. Simpson should go free, says architecture critic, Michael Sorkin.

On O.J. Simpson's workout video, taped just two weeks before the murders of his ex-wife and her friend, The Juice tells viewers: "I used to walk on the wild side, now I just walk."

And that's exactly what architecture critic, Michael Sorkin predicts will happen to Simpson.



"Let O.J. Simpson go free," says Sorkin. "It doesnt matter whether he's guilty or not.

"The legal system doesn't work anymore, especially where celebs are involved."

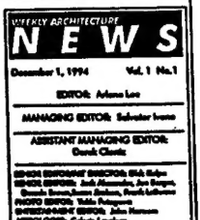
"If acquitted, Simpson will write a few books and do a lot of talk show appearances and make a fortune."

"If convicted, he'll serve a short sentence, and then he'll write a few books and do a lot of talk show appearances and make a fortune. So we might as well cancel the trial."

Sorkin claims only good can come of such a shocking move.

★ ★ ★

Rumplan architect Adolf Loos is not loose! The *Ornament is a Crime* star has agoraphobia - a fear of open spaces.



WEEKLY ARCHITECTURE
NEWS
December 1, 1994 Vol. 1 No.1
EDITOR: Arlene Lee
MANAGING EDITOR: Salvator Ivano
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR: Derek Clovis

"I get really uncomfortable in large groups and I'm very reclusive," he confesses.

"I'm a fairly anti-social person and I've always felt like a shy creep - but now that I've got agoraphobia, I've just got much worse."

Incredibly, Loos likes the stay at home spin he's working on.

"Sometimes I look at these people who go out all the time, the people who make it their lives, and it seems to me like they're caught in this cycle of lost souls. These kind of people are really eerie to me."

-German Mirror

HOMEBODY: Adolf Loos.

★ ★ ★

A recurring death dream is haunting granddaddy to architecture star Philip Johnson - the old guy keeps dying in a car crash dressed like a woman.

"I have this dream that on my 90th birthday I die in a green Corvette Stingray," confesses Johnson, who is not quite 90 yet.

"I've had the same dream at least four times now. I get in that car, drive it and wreck it and die, as a Phillis." Johnson says he's really worried about the nightmares. At least he now not to do on his 90th birthday."

- London Star

★ ★ ★

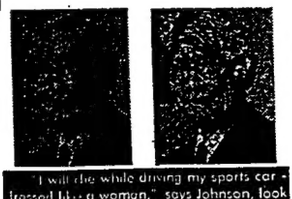
Here are the I.Q. scores of a famous architect, a rock 'n' roll star, a black pro athlete and a Harvard grad who became a war hero, won a Pulitzer Prize and was elected President.

Anarchitecture: Architecture is a Political Act author Lebbeus Woods checks in at a modest 104.

Madonna has a 140 I.Q.

Hall of Fame baseball player Reggie Jackson scored a genius level 160.

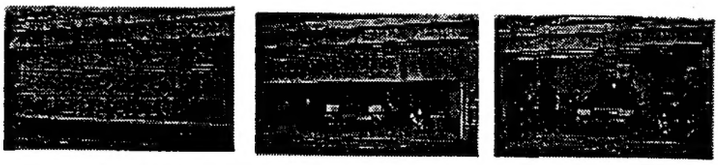
And JFK had an average 119 I.Q.



"I will die while driving my sports car - dressed like a woman," says Johnson, look alike Phillis - right

When gal presses button, all hell breaks loose

NEIGHBOR Ava Herlitz holds the garage door opener that's been raising more than eyebrows



WITH THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON . . . amazing garage door opener does a lot more than this!

Neighbor's garage door opener turns on architect's sex implant!

By JOE BERGER / *Staff writer*

NEW YORK - Embarrassed architect Peter Eisenman got a fangled electronic penis implant to cure his impotence. And now, every time the neighbor lady uses her garage door opener, the architect's manhood leaps to attention!

"This is the most humiliating thing that's ever happened to me," groaned frantic Peter, 62.

"The remote-controlled implant they gave me is supposed to be the latest thing in space-age medicine. But Mrs. Herlitz, who lives right next door to the office, must be on the same radio frequency I am - because every time she opens up her garage, I find myself standing straight and proud.

"It's bad enough when I'm puttering around with friends in the backyard. But it's really mortifying when I'm standing in front of the clients presenting my designs."

The grid-shifting architect's troubles began in late 1991 when his penchant for passion suddenly petered out.

"I'd been married 28 years, had four kids and never had a bit of a problem - and then boom, everything fell apart on me," said the hangdog dad. "My wife Elana and I are still very much in love, so the situation was heartbreaking for both of us."

"And when my doctor told me about a radio-controlled implant that would get me going at the touch of a button, I jumped at the chance, figuring my troubles would soon be over."

PUTTING A STOP TO IT: Mrs. Herlitz, left meets with the Eisenmans.

But hapless Peter quickly discovered his woes were just beginning.

"They gave me a transmitter to keep by the bed and they told me any time I wanted an erection I could just push the button," said the perturbed architect. "But right off, I started hopping to attention whether I'd push the button or not.

"The first Monday morning I had it, I was giving a presentation and there it went. I had to make a dash for the confrence table to get out of sight. And since then it's been going off two or three times a day, always in the worst possible situations."

Flabbergasted Peter finally realized he was rising to the occasion every time next-door Ava Herlitz, 72, used her garage door opener.

"Ava's not one of my clients, but she's a real sweet lady, so the other day my wife and I had a chat with her," said the harried hubby.

"And she agreed not to use her garage door opener anymore than she absolutely has to until my doctors figure out how to get me out of this predicament. Fortunately, the poor woman had a good sense of humor about the thing. She said she'd never open her garage door again without thinking of me - and blushing."

GRID-SHIFTING ARCHITECT Peter Eisenman was embarassed while he delivered a Monday presentation.